

ABSTRACT
SOCIAL WORK

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B.A. INDIANA UNIVERSITY, 1998

UTILIZATION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT
BY AFRICAN AMERICAN MOTHERS IN THE DISCIPLINING
OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN

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Thesis dated May, 2001

This study examines the use of corporal punishment by African American mothers in their attempt to eliminate present and long-term perceived misbehaviors. It is hypothesized that African American mothers who primarily utilize corporal punishment to discipline their children, will find that corporal punishment, used in moderation with other nonphysical discipline techniques, are effective in eliminating problem behaviors such as physical aggression and defiance of authority.

The sample population consisted of five African American mothers with one focus child between the ages of 5-8 years of age. The mothers represented various age, educational, marital, and socioeconomic statuses. An A-B single system design was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. The findings indicate that African American mothers' use of a mild form of corporal punishment in moderation with nonphysical discipline techniques, is effective in reducing problem behaviors such as, physical aggression and defiance of authority in African American children.

UTILIZATION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT
BY AFRICAN AMERICAN MOTHERS IN THE DISCIPLINING
OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MAY 2001

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to give thanks to God. Thank you for continuing to bless me. Next, I would like to give thanks to my family. First to my wonderful parents, Carolyn Martin-Harmon and Elmon Harmon, for all of the sacrifices they have made and the various forms of support they have provided throughout my academic career. I love you two very much. To my sister, Shawna, I thank you for motivating me through example. I am very proud of you. To my big sister Ericka and my nephew Chad, I thank you both for listening to me complain all of the time, and occasionally providing me with substance and a place to lay my head. I also would like to thank my extended family for their love and support. To my wonderful friends, KH, CM, and CM, I thank you for continuing to be my friends despite the fact that I neglected you throughout the process of writing my paper. Having supportive, understanding friends is such a beautiful thing. I also would like to thank my classmate Madricka Pyron for helping me to secure my research population and Dr. Karen Starks-Canada for providing me with the structure I needed to begin my work on this paper. Last, but not least, I would like to give an extra special thanks to my advisor, Dr. Bernice W. Liddie-Hamilton. Thank you for your guidance and the tremendous amount of time you dedicated to helping me complete this paper. You are by far the hardest working, most dedicated professor I have ever had. I could not have chosen a better thesis advisor.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

Research has shown that parents, [which throughout this study will refer to the child's primary male or female caregivers], who do not use corporal punishment as their primary form of discipline, or those that show a balance between corporal punishment and nurturing behavior that promotes their child's psychological well-being, report less problem behaviors in their children (Brenner, Fox, 1998; Fox, Platz, 1995). Some experts have found that mild spanking in conjunction with nonphysical discipline are extremely effective in eliminating problem behaviors (Jones, 1993). Despite this, many parents continue to use corporal punishment as their primary means of discipline (Dadds, 1987; Brenner et al, 1998). This issue, the use of corporal punishment, is one that affects all children, however, this paper will focus on the use of corporal punishment as one of the disciplinary practices of African American mothers. Many African American mothers believe that they can "beat the badness out of their kids" (Jones, 1993, p. 81). The purpose of this study was to present tangible information from African American mothers regarding their perceptions of the most effective combination of corporal punishment and non-physical disciplines used to discipline African American children.

Background of the Problem

The ideas and practices regarding the most effective means of disciplining children have long been debated. Some people argue that if you spare the rod, you spoil the child. Others believe that it is never okay to place physical force on another person. One of the main reasons why parents discipline their children is in the hopes of putting an end to their child's perceived misbehaviors. Yet, research on the topic of corporal punishment and behavior problems in children show that parents who practice this form of discipline do not report lower rates of behavior problems in their children (Brenner et al, 1998; Fox et al, 1995). Parents who use corporal punishment as the primary form of discipline actually report higher rates of problem behavior in their children than do parents who primarily utilize non-physical disciplinary practices (Fox, Platz, 1995; Brenner, Fox, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

Patterson's (1986) model of antisocial behavior highlights "poor parental use of discipline" as the initial step in the development of antisocial behavior (Patterson, 1986; Brenner et al, 1998, p. 251; Poduska, 2000).

Patterson's 'coercion model' describes how uninformed parents can inadvertently reinforce a child's antisocial behaviors, (such as noncompliance with rules and social norms, aggression, or tantrums), by using a combination of inconsistent, harsh and ineffective discipline techniques. The parent gives in to the negative behavior at times, but disciplines harshly or explosively at other times. The child learns to counter these punitive acts by the parent with more aggressive behavior or tantrums, leading to escalating 'coercive interchanges' (<http://ag.arizona.edu/fcr/fs/nowg/contrib.html>).

Given this information, one can conclude that the use of corporal punishment as a primary form of discipline for young children can result in the encouragement of early behavior disorders like Conduct and Oppositional Defiant Disorders.

Research conducted by Brenner et al, 1998; Fox et al, 1995; and Straus, 1996, has shown that there is a positive correlation between corporal punishment and increased antisocial behavior, but unfortunately, a causal relationship between the two has yet to be established. This is due, in part, to uncontrollable extraneous variables such as, individual participant's values, religious beliefs, educational level, socioeconomic status, and community influence, all of which have the potential to "influence a child's proclivity to violence in adulthood" (Bauman, 1996, p. 843). Due to the lack of research affirming the causal relationship between the use of corporal punishment and antisocial behavior, many parents and parenting experts continue to believe that parents can utilize corporal punishment, nonphysical discipline techniques, and nurturing to alleviate perceived misbehaviors (Fox et al, 1995). Yet, the identification of this unique balance between physical discipline and nonphysical discipline, that does not produce short and long-term negative side effects, has yet to be identified.

Significance of the study

Traditionally corporal punishment was used to correct quickly a child whose behavior was perceived to be in need of disciplining or detrimental to the child's well being. Many African American mothers used it as a "corrective device" that stemmed from their "spirit of love, authority, respect" and desire for their child to survive in a racist society (Jones, 1993, p. 80). African American parents often had no choice but to

use corporal punishment, to instill a physical fear in their child, that would help prevent him or her from breaking the rules of a racially prejudiced society. This fear of physical punishment at the hands of ones' African American caregiver helped to prevent children from becoming 'strange fruit' or a victim of other forms of racial terrorism.

Some African American mothers, who find themselves overwhelmed by work, single-parenthood, poverty and unemployment, are often unwilling or unable to take the time that is required to utilize some of the many forms of nonphysical discipline, including contracting, allowing safe, natural consequences to occur, or removing privileges (Jones, 1993). Other African American mothers, until mandated by child welfare departments to take part in parenting classes, are often unaware of alternative nonphysical discipline techniques (Jones, 1993).

Child development professional, Evelyn K. Moore, executive director of the National Black Child Development Institute, challenges African American parents to take on a more sophisticated means of disciplining their children (Jones, 1993). According to Moore, "Children are imitators of behavior, and how adults interact with them often results in how children interact with their peers" (Jones, 1993, p.82). Unfortunately, very limited research has been conducted focusing solely on the use and practice of corporal punishment by African American mothers and its effectiveness in disciplining African American children. Due to the paucity of substantial research, showing that excessive use of corporal punishment by African American mothers is less effective than alternative forms of discipline and has long-term side effects, it has been hard to persuade the African American community to change their disciplining practices. An additional factor may be the lack of modeling of more effective parenting behaviors.

The excessive use, misuse, or misapplication of corporal punishment by some African American caregivers, is an important issue for clinical social workers for several reasons. First, it is often the clinical social worker's responsibility to educate caregivers on the most effective way to parent children. This is often done in the form of instructing mandated and non-mandated parenting classes. Yet, there is a tremendous need for the preventive education of African American mothers regarding the most effective means of disciplining their children.

Second, it is the social worker's responsibility to help promote and protect the well-being of vulnerable groups of people, which includes children. Each year over one million children are abused, in the name of "discipline", due to the excessive use of corporal punishment (Block, 2000). In part, some caregivers lack the skills and knowledge needed to utilize alternative forms of discipline. Caregivers who only know corporal punishment as a form of discipline tend to use it to extreme measures when their child's behavior problems increase, or when the caregivers stress level escalates (Fox et al, 1995). This often results in physical injuries and child abuse. Finally, social workers have a responsibility to promote the well-being of society. If the practice of corporal punishment has harmful consequences on society, by influencing antisocial behavior in citizens, it is our duty as social workers to attempt to put an end to the use of corporal punishment as a sole response to perceptions of misbehavior. It is our responsibility as social work researchers to find ways in which corporal punishment can be used without causing such serious side effects.

Research Questions

1. Will a decrease in the use of corporal punishment by African American mothers result in fewer reports of physical aggression exhibited by their children?
2. Are African American children, disciplined primarily with corporal punishment, more defiant of authority?
3. Are nonphysical discipline techniques effective in eliminating problem behaviors in the sample population of African American children between the ages of 5 – 8 years old?
4. When African American mothers utilize nonphysical discipline techniques to discipline their children, do they report having to use more nonphysical discipline techniques to eliminate problem behaviors than they do when they utilize primarily corporal punishment techniques?
5. Can a combination of nonphysical discipline techniques and corporal punishment be used together to effectively eliminate problem behaviors in African American children between the ages of 5-8 years old?

In this chapter the purpose and goals of the study were identified. Chapter two provides a historical review of the problem and the findings of researchers who have conducted studies on the use of corporal punishment or similar topics. Chapter three presents the hypothesis and theories guiding the study. Chapter four describes the sample and methodology used to collect and analyze the data. Chapter five presents the data analysis and findings. And, chapter six discusses implications for the social work profession.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents the background information needed to fully understand the impact that the use of corporal punishment as a form of discipline has on African American mothers and children between the ages of 5 and 8 years old. It provides the reader with a historical understanding of how corporal punishment has and continues to affect the African American community, and the general premise behind the arguments for and against the use of corporal punishment to discipline children. The outcome of scholarly studies, most of which utilized majority White maternal populations, on the correlation between the use of corporal punishment, physical aggression and defiance, and factors that influence a mother's likelihood of utilizing corporal punishment as a primary means of discipline, are also presented.

The use of corporal punishment to discipline children dates back to biblical times. Even today, religious leaders, who believe in the use of corporal punishment, utilize the Bible to legitimize its use in developing obedience and character in children (Block, 2000). Proverbs 22:15 reads, "A youngster's heart is filled with foolishness, but discipline will drive it away" (<http://bible.crosswalk.com/>). The Book of Proverbs 23:13-14 states, "Don't fail to correct your children. They won't die if you spank them. Physical discipline may well save them from death" (<http://bible.crosswalk.com/>). Some religious leaders go so far as to say that there should be a physical object, called the "rod of

correction”, to spank a misbehaving child’s bottom (Block, 2000, p. 5). Many preach that it is child abuse not to use physical discipline; that those who do not will incur the “wrath of God” (Block, 2000, p. 5). Proverbs 13:24 states, “If you refuse to discipline your children, it proves you don’t love them; if you love your children, you will be prompt to discipline them” (<http://bible.crosswalk.com/>).

Though many religious organizations take it upon themselves to guide their congregations in raising their children, most parenting experts would agree that the use of objects to inflict physical punishment on a child is taking corporal punishment to the extreme. While most religious leaders are not extremist in advocating for the physical infliction of pain on children, they often do not deliver clear messages about disciplining children. Vague statements, reinforced by quotes from the Bible, are just as detrimental today as they were when they were used to justify the maintenance of slavery.

Historically, many African Americans have been subjected to physical punishment since the beginning of slavery in the 1600’s. During slavery, corporal punishment was used to humiliate, lower self-esteem, decrease slaves’ will to resist, and to promote his or her submission to White authority (Raymond, Jones, Cooke, 1998). Corporal punishment in many forms, such as wiping, was used by slave owners to intimidate and oppress slaves (Raymond et al, 1998). Like many other artifacts of slavery that Blacks carried into the next century, the use of corporal punishment for many African Americans, continues to be a part of the culture.

Psychologist, Robert E. Larzelere, director of residential research at Boys Town in Nebraska, reviewed 35 scholarly studies on spanking and concluded that non-abusive spanking is not damaging to children (Rosellini et al, 1998). According to Larzelere “no

other discipline technique ---including time-out and withdrawal of privileges---had more beneficial results for children under 13 than spanking, in terms of getting children to comply with their parents' wishes" (Rosellini et al, 1998, p. 55). Due to its ability to put a quick and immediate cessation to a perceived misbehavior, the use of physical forms of punishment have a long and varied history in the African American community. African American caregivers often resorted to it when their child's behavior was perceived as contributing to life threatening consequences (Raymond et al, 1998). Drs. James P. Comer and Alvin F. Poussaint state in their book, "Raising Black Children" (1992), that "During slavery and other repressive periods in this country, Blacks felt a need to control [their] kids, hoping to prevent them from acting up or getting out of place" (Comer, Poussaint, 1992; Jones, 2000, p. 81). Slaves, fearful that their child may forget his or her "place", were quick to use physical punishment to make sure that the child stayed in line with the master's expectations. Slave parents' purpose in disciplining their children centered around attempts to insure their child's survival in a world that was set-up to physically and mentally destroy them (Raymond, et al, 1998).

Due to the circumstances of slavery, many slave mothers were unable to offer their children a balance between discipline and nurturing. Black women spent most of their time nurturing White children and insuring that they had the guidance that they needed. As a result, slave children were left with little parental guidance (Raymond, et al, 1998). With the end of slavery did not come more guidance and nurturing from African American mothers, but their continued absence from the home. From sharecropping to domestic work, each era has required that the African American mother work long hours outside of the home, leaving little time for her to nurture and shape the

moral development of her children (Raymond et al, 1988).

In the 1950 and 60's, African American parents continued to use corporal punishment in an attempt to insure their child's survival in a segregated society. Corporal punishment was used when the African American child "forgot" he or she could not drink out of the "White" fountain. Corporal punishment was used in an attempt to guide African American children living in a society with racist, hostile and discriminatory practices (Raymond et al, 1988). Today, outside of covert discriminatory practices such as, racial profiling, the previous justifications for the use of corporal punishment in the disciplining of African American children are no longer relevant due to the progressive race related changes brought about by laws prohibiting Jim Crow practices and other forms of overt racial discrimination. Yet, the slave model of parenting continues to be passed down from one generation to the next (Raymond et al, 1988). Our grandmothers used it, just as her mother did, and therefore it is the only form of discipline that many African American caregivers continue to rely on. Rosellini and Mulrine (1998) state "grandparents used to inundate a new mother with child-raising tips on everything from burping to bed-wetting". Advice giving was likely to include, "spare the rod and spoil the child" (Rosellini et al, 1998, p. 53).

Books on parenting, written by childcare experts such as Dr. Benjamin Spock, began to have a great influence on the way many White Americans raised their children. Parenting experts of the 1950's and 60's, including, Dr. Spock and T. Berry Brazelton, belittled the way in which parents of previous years disciplined their children (Rosellini et al, 1998). Dr. Spock's initial guides to parenting did not rule out spanking, but stressed that children are just as complex as adults and that they have a "host of psychic needs"

(Rosellini et al, 1998, p. 53). This philosophy brought to caregiver's attention children's need for balance between discipline, nurturing and patience from their parents. In the 70's and 80's, parenting experts, including Thomas Gordon, expanded on Dr. Spock's ideas and began advocating that children be treated as equal members of the family. These experts believed that children should be given the same amount of respect as the other older members of the family (Rosellini et al, 1998). Many Black mothers found these ideas to be too radical or to have little relevance to them and their lifestyle. So still many African American mothers continue to use corporal punishment as their primary form of discipline.

The parenting styles and practices that one chooses to use in raising his or her children are shaped by the opinions, practices, experiences, and observations of others' as well as ones' own childhood. Research conducted by Simons, Beaman, Conger, & Choas (1993) supports the idea that there are multiple determinants of parenting practices. Some of the factors found to influence the use of specific parenting practices include, parental belief about discipline, history of abuse as a child, grandparents' parenting practices, parents mental health status and marital happiness (Simons et al, 1993; Fox et al, 1995). Societal factors found to influence mothers use of corporal punishment include, marital status, religious beliefs, educational level, socioeconomic status, and community influence (Bauman, 1996).

There are some specific factors that have been found to be associated with the increased use of corporal punishment, as opposed to other less authoritative forms of discipline. These factors include: having expectations of higher than normal developmental levels of children, being depressed, having more than one child in the

home, being young, being a single parent and or having a low social economic status (Fox et al, 1995). Jones (1993), reports that the justification for the continued use of corporal punishment as one's primary form of discipline is that many African American mothers find themselves, overwhelmed by work, raising their children without a partner, living in poverty or unemployed. Many African American mothers, like other caregivers experiencing stress in so many areas of life, respond to misbehavior with corporal punishment as opposed to thinking of alternative disciplinary techniques (Holden et al, 1999).

Recent research on maternal use of corporal punishment and outcome expectations attempts to explain a great deal about why some mothers continue to use corporal punishment as their primary form of discipline. Two studies have been completed, (Rebecca Socolar and Ruth Stein (1995) and George Holden, Pamela Miller and Susan Harris (1999)), that specifically examined the use of spanking to discipline children and maternal outcome expectations. The Holden et al (1999) study looked at the use of corporal punishment and the outcome expectations of both mothers and fathers in a mid-sized southwestern city. The study's sample population consisted of only 10% non-white participants. For the purpose of this paper, only the maternal use and expectations will be discussed. The Holden et al (1999) study hypothesized that mothers who report they frequently spank their children believe that it is effective in disciplining their child, and will result in more positive outcomes than if they did not spank (Holden et al, 1999). The researchers also looked at the types of misbehaviors that would more likely result in the use of corporal punishment. The assumption was that the more dangerous the misbehavior, (e.g., running into the street), or behaviors that showed a lack of morality,

(e.g., stealing or vandalism), would more likely result in the use of corporal punishment to discipline the child (Holden et al, 1999).

Both studies found that mothers use spanking as a form of punishment because they believe in its effectiveness and not because it is an impulsive response due to their anger with the child's misbehavior (Socolar et al, 1995; Holden et al, 1999). Holden et al reported that, "mothers who reported using corporal punishment at least once a week used it because they believed that it was more likely to result in positive outcomes including immediate compliance and better child behavior in the long term" (Holden et al, 1999, p. 912). Holden et al cites a study conducted in Barbados that reported maternal thoughts on the advantages of spanking. Mothers in this study reported that they believed that spanking not only promotes obedience in short and long term situations, but that it also "deters future misbehavior, instills discipline and teaches right from wrong" (Holden et al, 1999, p. 909). Some of the mothers participating in the study also reported feeling that corporal punishment encouraged respect (Holden et al, 1999).

Factors found to intensify mother's beliefs in the use of corporal punishment as an effective and appropriate means of punishment included, if the child being disciplined was an older toddler, the dangerousness of the misbehavior, cultural norms and expectations, and whether or not the mother herself had been spanked as a child (Holden et al, 1999 and Socolar et al, 1995). Factors found to intensify the frequency of spanking focused on the type of misbehavior committed by the child. Some parents decide on the type of punishment to use based on the child's misbehavior. How serious a parent finds a child's misbehavior to be influences whether or not they choose to use corporal punishment. Mothers who reported that they believe in the use of corporal punishment

stated that they are more likely to use it when they believe that their child's misbehavior was intentional, or that the child could have controlled his or her behavior (Holden et al, 1999).

Often parents report that they feel bad after disciplining their children. Holden et al asked mothers about their level of guilt in regard to the practices used to discipline their child. Mothers who spanked regularly, at least once a week, reported that they feel their use of corporal punishment is appropriate and doing so did not cause them a significant amount of guilty feelings (Holden et al, 1999). The never spank group reported more maternal guilt following the use of "time-out" to discipline their child than reported by parents who use spanking (Holden et al, 1999).

A significant finding by Socolar et al (1995), whose sample population was obtained from a teaching pediatric clinic in the Bronx and a private clinic in Westchester county, was that the belief in the use of spanking was found to be related to the caregiver having a negative (e.g., along with spanking, disciplinary practices include, yelling, shaming, or ridiculing) approach toward discipline. For example, parents who believed in spanking not only practiced it but did it more frequently, spanked in places other than just the buttocks, used objects other than their hands to spank with, and spanked more severely (Scolar, 1995). Close to 20% of the parents who participated in a 1995 poll, reported that they hit their child with a brush, belt, or stick in the past year in an effort to discipline their child (Rosellini et al, 1998). This raises the question as to whether or not caregivers who hold a negative approach toward disciplining their child affect their child differently than parents who spank but hold a positive (e.g., along with spanking, disciplinary practices include praise, reasoning, or compromise) approach toward their

child. Sclar points out in his research that we still know little today about the definitive effects of the use of corporal punishment to discipline children as researchers did thirty years ago. W.C. Becker, stated in his 1964 article on the consequences of certain kinds of parental discipline that,

We do not know for sure that the obtained relationship between physical punishment and aggression is primarily a result of the kind of discipline used, a joint effect of hostility and type of punishment, or primarily an effect of the parents' hostility. If we could find enough warm parents who relied primarily on physical punishment, or enough hostile parents who were not physically punitive, it might be possible to disentangle such effect (Sclar, 1995, p. 110).

Regardless of how one's belief in the use of corporal punishment was shaped, some people believe that no human being should be subjected to physical pain. There are two main arguments against the use of any and all forms of corporal punishment used to discipline children. The two arguments fall within the realm of respecting children's basic human rights and the fact that the use of non-abusive corporal punishment often gets out of control and becomes physical abuse (Block, 2000; Wuetcher, 1997).

Advocates for the discontinuation of corporal punishment in the disciplining of children include, Nadine Block, director of the Center for Effective Discipline and co-chair of the Columbus, Ohio based organization End Physical Punishment of Children (EPOCH). The organization, EPOCH, advocates for the end of corporal punishment, emphasizing that discipline should teach rather than punish, (Block, 2000). Block argues that, "No other population in the United States is subjected to corporal punishment, not prison or jail inmates, military personnel, or mental patients; nor is it allowed against a spouse, a neighbor, or even a neighbor's dog" (Block, 2000, p. 5). Corporal punishment is looked down on when used with these groups because of its submissive, authoritative,

self-esteem lowering, and humiliating effects. Society sees the use of corporal punishment on the above groups as inappropriate, but American caregivers continue to justify its use in disciplining children.

Law professor and advisory board member of EPOCH, Susan Bitensky, has suggested that the use of corporal punishment should be considered just as criminal as physical assaults by adults against other adults (Block, 2000). Some countries including, Sweden, Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland and Norway, agree with Bitensky and have made the use of corporal punishment against children, a criminal offense. Block (2000) reports that, "Nine European countries have banned corporal punishment in all settings, including the home." The only movement that America has made in this direction has been in the school system. Block (2000) argues that the trend to eliminate the use of corporal punishment in school may be due to data collected by the Center for Effective Discipline, that estimates that 2% of children who are paddled by school personnel require medical attention. Currently there are 23 states, most concentrated in the south and southwest portion of the country, including Georgia, that have not banned the use of corporal punishment in public schools (Block, 2000, p. 7).

Several studies suggest that child abuse is one of the many concerns of those against the use of corporal punishment, due to the fact that most child abuse cases start out with a parent attempting to discipline their child for a perceived misbehavior (Wuetcher, 1997). Block (2000) argues that parents who are more likely to spank when they are tired, stressed, depressed, fatigued and or angry, are more likely to injure their child when disciplining with corporal punishment.

University of Buffalo professor of psychology and co-director of the Research

Center for Children and Youth, Anthony Graziano, reports that approximately 30% of middle-class families are at risk of child abuse, due to the risk of their use of “subabusive” corporal punishment practices (e.g., spanking with an object as opposed to a hand) getting out of control (Wuetcher, 1997). The dynamics in this relationship between corporal punishment and immediate compliance puts children at risk for child abuse. “Spanking works for a moment so parents often repeat spanking whenever the child misbehaves. Corporal punishment may then become a standard response to any misbehavior. This can lead to frequent and harsher spanking, which can lead to or exceed the ‘reasonable force’ threshold and become abuse” (Raymond et al, 1998, p. 293).

Wuetcher (1997) reported on a study conducted by Graziano in which he surveyed 590 middle-class parents and 320 of their children, between the ages of 6-11 years, on their use of corporal punishment. The subjects were primarily Caucasian. Of the population sampled, 25% of the families reported that they use corporal punishment at least once a week. Four percent of the children reported that they received some form of physically painful discipline everyday. Eighty-five percent of the parents in the study said that they would stop using corporal punishment if they believed that other forms of discipline were as effective (Wuetcher, 1997).

Wuetcher (1997) quotes Graziano as saying, “Corporal punishment in child-rearing should be discouraged, because it is morally objectionable and, in any event, is not even needed, it causes unnecessary pain and distress to children, and there are “effective painless, distressless alternative methods of discipline” (Wuethcer, 1997, p. 2).

Holden et al (1999) reported that mothers, participating in their study, believe that corporal punishment puts an immediate stop to perceived misbehaviors, but it is not

effective in helping to ensure future compliance. "Punishment does not teach children how they should behave. If children are not taught appropriate behaviors, the behavior will continue" (Raymond, 1998, p. 296).

Despite the various reasons that parents give for using corporal punishment, many parenting experts believe that the use of corporal punishment only models aggression as an appropriate form of dealing with conflicts. Jones (1993) quotes Dr. Comer as stating, "If you spank when you're out of control, you shouldn't be surprised when your child hits someone at school or on the playground" (Jones, 1993, p. 82).

Several studies have been conducted to evaluate whether or not the use of corporal punishment results in the alleviation of misbehavior or whether it increases it. Studies conducted by Fox and Platz (1995) and Brenner and Fox (1998), are among those that have found significant evidence that shows that parents who practice corporal punishment as a form of discipline, do not report lower rates of problem behavior in their children. What researchers have found is that parents who use corporal punishment as their primary form of discipline, actually report higher rates of problem behavior in their children than parents who primarily utilize non-physical disciplinary practices (Fox et al, 1995; Brenner et al, 1998).

Both of the above stated studies used the Parent Behavior Checklist (PBS), which assesses a mother's discipline and nurturing practices, as well as her expectations of her child, and the Behavior Screening Questionnaire (BSQ), to assess and compare the correlation between the use of corporal punishment and problem behaviors in children. Brenner et al (1998) hypothesized that "parents who use more frequent corporal and verbal punishments as illustrated by their PBS score, will report on the BSQ more

problem behaviors in their children” (Brenner et al, 1998, p. 251). Fox et al, (1995) had no hypothesis, but simply conducted their study to “expand the database on parenting practices among families with young children” (Fox et al, 1995, p. 433).

Brenner et al (1998) found that of the 1,056 mothers of children between the ages of 1-5 years that they surveyed, those who scored higher in the usage of corporal punishment also reported higher frequencies of problem behavior. Fox and Platz (1995), also found that high reports of behavior problems (e.g., spilling food), was correlated with low reports of nurturing behaviors (e.g., reading to one’s child at bedtime) by the parent.

Brenner et al (1998), state that the information they obtained is important, in that it can be used to support efforts to create assessment tools, that can be used to identify parents and children in need of interventions, to prevent the development and fostering of antisocial behavior.

Not only has the use of corporal punishment been associated with increased aggression in children, it has also been associated with an increased probability of societal violence. “Spanking and other forms of corporal punishment used to discipline children is just one of the many risk factors for societal violence” (Straus, 1996, p. 837).

An important role of parents is to socialize their child. Straus (1996) and McCord (1996), argue that corporal punishment is not a means in which parents can teach their children appropriate behaviors. Parents miss the opportunity to teach their children appropriate behaviors when they use corporal punishment to discipline them, as opposed to discussing with the child appropriate behaviors (McCord, 1996). Corporal punishment not only does not tell the children what they did wrong, but it also does not

provide any information about what behaviors are expected of them (McCord, 1996).

Straus points out that, “the more parents use corporal punishment to deal with a child’s misbehavior, the less opportunity the child has to observe and participate in nonviolent modes of conflict resolution” (Straus, 1996, p. 840). Joan Cohn points out that corporal punishment teaches children that it is sometimes okay to invoke physical pain on someone who they perceive to have misbehaved (Cohn, 1996). Evelyn K. Moore, executive director of the National Black Child Development Institute in Washington, D.C. argues that black caregivers are failing to teach their children how to effectively deal with conflicts in a nonviolent manner, which can be done through contracting and verbalizing expectations (Jones, 1993). Moore is quoted by Jones (1993) as saying, “Children are imitators of behavior, and how adults interact with them, results in how children interact with their peers” (Jones, 1993, p. 82). Straus (1996) calls this “role practice.” He states that, “each time a parent spansks a child for misbehaving, they are practicing the idea that people who misbehave should be hit” (Straus, 1996, p. 840). Physical violence, for example, fighting between two adults, is often done because one adult feels that the other has done something morally wrong (Straus, 1996). Straus (1996), points out that assaults and homicides committed by adults, are often done in an effort to punish the victim for what the victimizer views as misbehavior. “Both corporal punishment and criminal violence occur in response to what the parent who spansks, or the adult who throws a punch at another adult, considers to be outrageous or persistent misbehavior” (Straus, 1996, p. 837). Straus (1996), calls this use of learned or modeled “legitimate violence” in criminal acts, “cultural spillover.” This is when the same type of practice used to discipline children is also used in criminal acts of violence (Straus,

1996).

As stated in chapter one, Patterson (1986) and other childcare experts highlight “poor parental use of discipline” as the initial step in the development of antisocial behavior (Patterson, 1986; Brenner et al, 1998; Poduska, 2000). It is, therefore, imperative that the association between corporal punishment practices and the development of antisocial behaviors in children not be ignored.

In an article in Ebony Magazine entitled, ‘Why Are We Beating Our Children’, Jones points out that parenting experts say that African Americans need to utilize more “sophisticated” means of disciplining their children (Jones, 1993). A 1997 poll showed that Whites were more than twice as likely to disapprove of spanking than African Americans (Rosellini, 1998). This is reflected in the increasing number of African American children taken into the custody of Department of Family and Children Services nationally, due to physical abuse. Each year over 1 million children are abused in the name of “discipline” (Block, 2000). The National Incident Study of Child Abuse and Neglect reported that in 1993 an estimated 1,553,800 children in the United States were abused or neglected (Sedlack, Broadhurst, 1996). The study goes on to report that though, “White children are a larger majority of those who suffered serious injury, non-white children’s representation was strongest among those who experienced moderate injury” (Sedlack et al, 1996).

Many caregivers who only know corporal punishment as a form of discipline, use it to extreme measures when their child’s behavior problems increase, or when their own stress level escalates (Fox et al, 1995). This may be due, in part, to many parent’s lack of skills, knowledge, and patience needed to utilize alternative forms of discipline. There is

a tremendous need of education for African American parents regarding the most effective means of disciplining African American children, in an effort to eliminate problem behaviors, or else statistics regarding the physical injuries and child abuse will continue to rise.

In an effort to prevent the continued excessive use, misuse, and misapplication of corporal punishment techniques, dedicated social workers, including, Wadine DeBerry, a social work professor at Tennessee State University, have taken it upon themselves to teach parent's effective, non-abusive discipline techniques. DeBerry found that when educated through parenting classes, or other informational training means, (e.g., delivering informative documents from door to door), parents who normally used corporal punishment to discipline their children resorted to the use of nonphysical alternative forms of discipline to alleviate their child's misbehaviors (Jones, 1993). DeBerry and two of her colleagues went out into their community to teach over 200 parents "discipline techniques that do not result in child abuse" (Jones, 1993). The discipline techniques Dewberry and her colleagues taught parents included, talking and negotiating privileges (Jones, 1993). Parenting classes can be used to teach parents alternative ways to discipline their children, how to properly spank their child, and normal child development, which can help to increase their understanding and tolerance of childhood behaviors. Jones points out that, "a parent who understands a child's behavior is less likely to be abusive" (Jones, 1993). It is therefore critical for churches, community centers, schools and social service agencies to provide parenting classes to teach parents positive constructive parenting techniques (Jones, 1993).

Not all childcare researchers and professionals advocate for the cessation in the

use of corporal punishment as a form of disciplining children. What many researchers are advocating for is the use of corporal punishment as an alternative to nonphysical discipline techniques, and in conjunction with nurturing and supportive parenting behaviors (Brenner et al, 1998; Fox et al, 1995). Dr. Comer points out that many parents believe that they can “beat the badness out of their kids” (Jones, 1993, p. 81). But, instead of “beating the badness out” through the use of corporal punishment, parents end up abusing their children (Raymond et al, 1998). Experts in parenting have found that mild spankings, coupled with other forms of behavior modification techniques, can be very effective in ridding “bad” behavior (Jones, 1993). The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that if a parent decides to use spanking as a form of punishment, that he or she uses “one or two flat-handed swats on a child’s wrist or rear end,” as a backup to other forms of alternative discipline techniques (Avram, 1996, Rosellini et al, 1998, p. 56). Research has shown that when spanking is used to back-up an alternative form of discipline, the misbehavior takes twice as long to reoccur than if the nonphysical punishment is used alone (Rosellini et al, 1998). “There is no evidence that a child, who is spanked moderately, is going to grow up to be a criminal or antisocial or violent,” says S. Kenneth Schomberg, a pediatrics professor who co-chaired the 1996 AAP conference (Rosellini et al, 1998, p. 52).

Some alternative forms of discipline include, separating the child from others for a short period of time, taking away or negotiating privileges and talking, lecturing the child about his or her behavior, or, the use of “natural consequences” which automatically result from the child’s behavior (Rosellini et al, 1998). An example of a natural consequence includes, when a child refuses to eat breakfast, just allowing the child to go

hungry that morning (Rosellini et al, 1998).

Parents need to offer their child a “well rounded discipline package” (Jones, 1993, p. 84). Parents need to make sure that they praise their children when they do good things. If a child only gets attention from a parent when he or she misbehaves, that child will be more likely to act out than to behave. Jones says that we must, “love abundantly and discipline constructively” (Jones, 1993, p. 84). Experts agree that this is the most effective, non-damaging parenting style.

Roseillini et al (1998), reports that the AAP tells pediatricians to advise parents not to use spanking as their only form of discipline. The AAP also states that parents should not spank when they are angry, nor should they spank children under the age of 2 years, or adolescents (Roseillini et al, 1998). Spanking has been shown to be useful in disciplining children between the ages of two and six, as a back-up when alternative forms of discipline have failed (Rosellini et al, 1998). In 1994, a group of pediatricians reviewed 132 scholarly articles, written between the dates of 1984 to 1993, on the use of corporal punishment in children. After reviewing these articles, the pediatricians concluded that the writings reinforce the notion that spanking is effective in disciplining children between the ages of two and six, when it is used as a backup to other nonphysical discipline techniques (Avram, 1996, Rosellini et al, 1998).

The presentation of the contradictory arguments outlined in this chapter, for and against the use of corporal punishment, and studies, proclaiming its impact on the behavior of majority non-African American children, highlights the need for conclusive studies regarding the use of corporal punishment and its effects on children in general, and for the purpose of this thesis, African American children in particular. Reflection on

the wealth of literature, emphasizing the behavioral benefits of combining corporal punishment and nonphysical discipline techniques in majority non-African American populations, testify to the importance of conducting research with a population of African American mothers.

CHAPTER III

CONCEPTUAL/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will present to the reader the theories used to guide this study, the research questions that the study will answer, the research hypothesis, and the operational definitions of terms used throughout the study.

Straus and colleagues (1996), developed several theories, explaining the process that brings about the link between corporal punishment and the display of violent behavior as an adult, that make up the theoretical framework of this study. The first theory is that the extended use of corporal punishment to discipline a child “creates a generally angry” person (Straus, 1996). This theory was suggested by Straus and Ellen Cohn, after conducting a survey of college students, in which they were asked about their reactions to corporal punishment the first time they were hit by a parent and the most recent time. For both, the first and most recent instances, 42% reported that they felt hatred toward their parent (Straus, 1996). From this, Straus and Cohn concluded that, “the use of corporal punishment by parents creates a generally angry child” (Straus, 1996, p. 839). “Because their [the sample population] anger is for something that goes on for an average of 14 years, it led us to the hypothesis that anger at parents could be generalized to anger at humanity, i.e., that corporal punishment increases the risk of becoming a generally angry person” (Straus, 1996, p. 839).

Another linkage theory Straus drew from is the social learning theory, which highlights imitation or observation of a model (e.g. a mother), as significantly influencing a child's behavior (Robbins, Chatterjee, and Canada, 1998). In a 1985 National Family Violence survey, in which Straus and Carrie Yodanis asked a group of random adults, "Are there situations that you can imagine in which you would approve of a wife slapping her husband's face?" and the very opposite regarding a husband slapping his wife, 21% approved of a wife slapping her husband and 14% approved of a husband slapping his wife (Straus, 1996, p. 839). Straus and Yodanis found that those who had experienced more corporal punishment as a child were more likely to agree with slapping a spouse. Straus and Yodanis interpreted this as showing that, "corporal punishment provides a model for what to do when someone misbehaves and persists in misbehavior" (Straus, 1996, 839). This is a well known and proven concept called "modeling", which is the demonstration of behavior, good or bad, that is later imitated.

Jones' (1993) concept of using mild spanking coupled with other forms of nonphysical discipline techniques as an effective means of eliminating problem behaviors in children, like physical aggression and defiance of authority, was also used to establish the conceptual framework of this study.

Statement of Research Questions

1. Will a decrease in the use of corporal punishment by African American mothers result in fewer reports of physical aggression exhibited by their children?
2. Are African American children, disciplined primarily with corporal punishment, more defiant of authority?

3. Are nonphysical discipline techniques effective in eliminating problem behaviors in the sample population of African American children between the ages of 5 – 8 years old?
4. When African American mothers utilize primarily nonphysical discipline techniques to discipline their children do they report having to use more discipline techniques to eliminate problem behaviors than they do when they utilize primarily corporal punishment techniques?
5. Can a combination of nonphysical discipline techniques and corporal punishment be used together to effectively eliminate problem behaviors in African American children between the ages of 5-8 years old?

Hypothesis

African American mothers who primarily utilize corporal punishment to discipline their children will find that corporal punishment, used in moderation with other nonphysical discipline techniques, are effective in eliminating problem behaviors such as, physical aggression and defiance of authority.

Operational Definitions

Abusive punishment - “punishment that causes bruises or other physical injuries”

(Rosellini et al, 1998)

American Academy of Pediatrics recommended form of spanking - “using one or two flat-handed swats on a child’s wrist or rear end” (Rosellini et al, 1998).

Corporal punishment - “the intentional infliction of physical pain for a perceived misbehavior”(Block, 2000).

Defiant of authority - continuous disobedient and hostile behavior towards persons who attempt to give guidance and enforce rules (American Heritage Dictionary, 1994; Carson, Butcher and Mineka, 1999).

Nurturing - "specific parenting behaviors that promote a child's psychological growth"(Fox et al, 1995).

Parent - for the purpose of this study, the child's male or female primary caregiver.

Mother - for the purpose of this study, the child's female primary caregiver.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents concise information regarding the sample population, measurements used to collect the data, and how it was analyzed.

Sample

The sample population and size consisted of five African American mothers with one focus child between the ages of 5-8 years of age. All of the mothers indicated that the current primary discipline technique being used with their child was corporal punishment. There were no demographic requirements regarding extraneous variables such as, gender of focus child, age, educational attainment, marital, or socioeconomic status of the mother. This was done in hopes of increasing the possibility of obtaining a diverse sample so that the study's outcomes may be more generalizable. The procedure used to draw the sample was to post flyers that briefly described the study and sample population requirements. The fliers were posted in the metropolitan Atlanta area at Lucent Technologies and various locations on the Clark Atlanta University (CAU) campus.

Setting

The sample population was obtained from Lucent Technologies and Clark Atlanta University. The measurements were delivered to each participant, either at their place of employment or home. The mothers were given detailed instructions, by the facilitator,

regarding when to answer the questionnaires and when and how to fill-out the journal sheets. All journal documentation and completion of the questionnaires were done by the mothers in their respective environments.

Measure

Five questionnaires were created to obtain information needed to answer the research questions. The first questionnaire consisted of 14 questions regarding demographic information about the mother and focus child. The second questionnaire consisted of ten questions concerning the mother's beliefs regarding the use of corporal punishment and nonphysical forms of discipline. This questionnaire was structured to provide information regarding why corporal punishment was being used by the mothers. The third questionnaire consisted of five questions regarding the mother's corporal punishment practices, or how the mother administers corporal punishment. The fourth questionnaire consisted of questions regarding the mother's perception of her child's level of physical aggression toward his or her peers. This questionnaire consisted of 5 questions and was repeated each week throughout the course of the study. The fifth and final questionnaire consisted of questions regarding the child's continuous disobedience and hostile behavior towards persons who attempt to provide guidance and enforce rules. Like the fourth questionnaire, it also consisted of 5 questions and was repeated each week during the study. All of the questionnaires were set-up on a 5-point-Likert scale. The mothers participating in the study also used a journal sheet to document their child's misbehaviors and their disciplinary actions to the perceived misbehavior.

Design

The design used for the study was an A-B single systems design, which consists of the combination of a baseline observation period, A, and an intervention phase, B. There was an initial 7-day baseline measurement and two weeks of continuous measurements once the intervention was introduced. There are 5 individual units of analyses, as each mother represents a single system.

Procedure

The duration of the study consisted of three consecutive weeks. The baseline measurement was taken during week one. The mothers were asked at the beginning of that first week to fill-out all five questionnaires. Once all of the questionnaires were completed, the mothers were to begin the journaling technique. The mothers were asked to maintain the journal for one week. This initial journal and the questionnaires, regarding the mother's perception of her child's aggression toward his or her peers and defiance of authority, served as the baseline measurement of the mother's use of corporal punishment and her child's current level of aggression and level of defiance.

At the beginning of week two, the intervention was introduced. The intervention, the independent variable, consisted of a list of various nonphysical discipline techniques (see appendix H) and the American Association of Pediatricians recommended method of spanking, one to two flat-handed swats on the child's hand, arm, or rear end (Rosellini et al, 1998). The mothers were encouraged to use the new forms of discipline with their children, as opposed to previously used forms of corporal punishment for the remaining two weeks of the study. They were asked to try at least two forms of nonphysical

discipline techniques before resorting to the AAP form of spanking. If the mother found that the second non-physical discipline technique was not successful in ceasing the child's behavior, only at that time was she asked to resort to spanking her child, using the technique APA recommended spanking technique.

At the end of the second week of the study, the mother's journal entries were collected and they were given the third set of questionnaires and more journal sheets. Again, the mothers completed the defiance of authority and aggression questionnaires. At the end of the third week, the researcher collected all of the mother's journal entries and questionnaires.

The SPSS statistical package was used to generate the charts and tables used to present the data reported by the mothers to each questionnaire and her journal results. A calculator was used to generate the average of corporal punishment techniques per disciplined behavior and nonphysical discipline techniques per disciplined behavior based on the mothers' reports on the journal sheets. The data obtained by the mothers was analyzed for its theoretical significance. That is, if the expected pattern of behavior based on anger theory, social learning theory, and the two concepts regarding the used of mild spanking, and teaching parents to use nonphysical discipline techniques appear to be present.

This chapter provided the reader with detailed information about the sample population, the setting in which the research took place, the measurements used to collect the data, the study's design, and the procedures used to obtain and analyze the data. The results of the analyses are presented in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter tables and graphs are used to visually present the data collection and analysis. Data for each individual case will be presented on individual graphs, with the exception of the demographic information and the mother's responses to the corporal punishment beliefs and practices questionnaires, which will be presented simultaneously on five individual graphs. A literary analysis follows the graphic presentation of the data collection of each individual case.

Table 1

Demographic Information of the African American Mothers Participating in the study

case #	age of parents	marital status	# of children living in home	education	employment status	household income
1	30.00	Not married spouse living in home	1.00	college degree	full-time employment	\$30,000 - \$39,999
2	29.00	Spouse living in home with mother and child	2.00	college degree	full-time employment	\$70,000 or more
3	26.00	Spouse living in home with mother and child	3.00	completed high school	unemployed	\$30,000 - \$39,999
4	23.00	not married live-in partner	1.00	some college	full-time employment	\$20,000 - \$29,999
5	24.00	not married	2.00	completed high school	unemployed	\$10,000 - \$19,999

The five African American mothers who participated in the study ranged in age from 23-30 years old. Cases 1 and 5 reported that they are single, never married, and did not have a partner living in the home. Cases 2 and 3 reported being married and Case 4 reported being single, never married, but having a live-in partner. Cases 2 and 5 reported having two children living in the home including the focus child, Case 3 reported having three children including the focus child, and Cases 1 and 4 reported having only the focus child living in the home. None of the mothers reported having any birth children living outside of the home. Cases 3 and 5 reported completing only high school, Case 4 reported completing some college, and Cases 1 and 2 reported having a college degree. Cases 1, 2, and 4 reported being employed full-time while Cases 3 and 5 reported that they were currently unemployed. Case 5 reported a household income of \$10,000-19,999, Case 4 reported \$20,000-29,999, Cases 1 and 3 reported \$30,000-39,999, and Case 2 reported \$70,000 or more. (Table 1)

Table 2

Demographics of Focus Child

case #	# of children living in home	focus child's gender	age of focus child	grade level	significant mental or medical conditions
1	1.00	son	8.00	3rd grade	none
2	2.00	son	6.00	1st grade	none
3	3.00	son	7.00	2nd grade	none
4	1.00	son	6.00	kindergarten	none
5	2.0	daughter	7.00	2nd grade	none

All of the focus children are African American and range in age from 6 – 8 years old. There are four boys and one girl in the study. The grade levels represented by the children included, kindergarten, first grade, second grade and third grade. None of the mother's participating in the study reported their child as having a mental or medical condition. (Table 2)

Table 3.1

Results from Corporal Punishment Beliefs Questionnaire

case #	It is okay to use physical punishment to discipline a child between the ages of 5-8 years	It has been my experience that physical punishment eliminates problem behaviors in children	The use of physical punishment to discipline children is a cultural phenomenon	My parents used physical punishment to discipline me and that is why I turned out to be a respectable citizen	If you spare the rod, you spoil the child
1	agree	disagree	not sure	strongly disagree	disagree
2	strongly agree	agree	not sure	agree	strongly agree
3	strongly agree	strongly agree	not sure	disagree	strongly agree
4	strongly agree	strongly agree	not sure	strongly agree	strongly agree
5	strongly agree	agree	disagree	agree	strongly agree

Table 3.2

Results from Corporal Punishment Beliefs Questionnaire (continued)

<i>case #</i>	Caucasian children do not need to be physically punished because they are more well behaved than African American children	The use of physical punishment to discipline children is the only way to get them to behave	African American parents use physical punishment to discipline their children more often than Caucasian parents	Physical punishments are more effect than non physical punishments when used to discipline children	Parents who do not use physical punishments to discipline their children will suffer later when their children become out of control
1	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	disagree	disagree
2	strongly disagree	disagree	not sure	disagree	disagree
3	strongly disagree	not sure	not sure	strongly agree	strongly agree
4	strongly disagree	disagree	strongly agree	disagree	agree
5	strongly agree	agree	agree	agree	agree

Table 4

Results of Corporal Punishment Practices Questionnaire

<i>case #</i>	I spank my child with a belt, purse strap, switch, extension cord or similar objects	I spank my child at least 5 times per week	My child has visual marks on his or her body immediately after I physically punish him or her	I use time-out or similar forms of nonphysical punishments to discipline my child before I resort to physical punishments	As a form of punishment, I shake, slap, punch, kick, or throw objects at my child
1	agree	disagree	not sure	strongly disagree	disagree
2	strongly agree	agree	not sure	agree	strongly agree
3	strongly agree	strongly agree	not sure	disagree	strongly agree
4	strongly agree	strongly agree	not sure	strongly agree	strongly agree
5	strongly agree	agree	disagree	agree	strongly agree

Case 1: Mother is 30 years old, single, never married, has only 1 child living in the home, has attained a college degree, is employed full-time, and reported a household income of \$30,000-39,999 (Table 1). Focus child is a male, age 8, and in the third grade (Table 2).

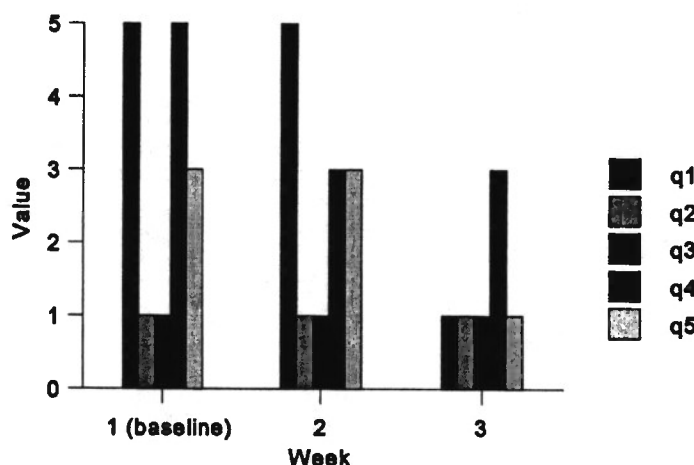


Figure 1.1. Case 1: Defiance of Authority

Value: Has not been disobedient =1; Was disobedient only once =2; Was disobedient twice =3; Was disobedient a few times =4; Was disobedient several times =5

Defiance of Authority Questions: q1. I told my child to stop doing something and he/she did not stop; q2. My child has answered “no” to my order or request; q3. My child has been report by a teacher or caregiver to be disobedient; q4. My child has repeated a behavior that I have previously punished him/her for; q5. My child has lied, been deceitful, or engaged in a behavior to avoid being detected for wrong-doing.

By week 3 Case 1 reported no occurrences of disobedience to q2-q5 (Figure 1.1).

The only occurrences of disobedience reported was to q4 which Case 1 reported taking place twice during week 3. This is a drop by more than two occurrences when compared to baseline (Figure 1.1).

The data reported by case 1 supports the hypothesis that mothers will report fewer instances of defiance with their increased use of nonphysical discipline techniques.

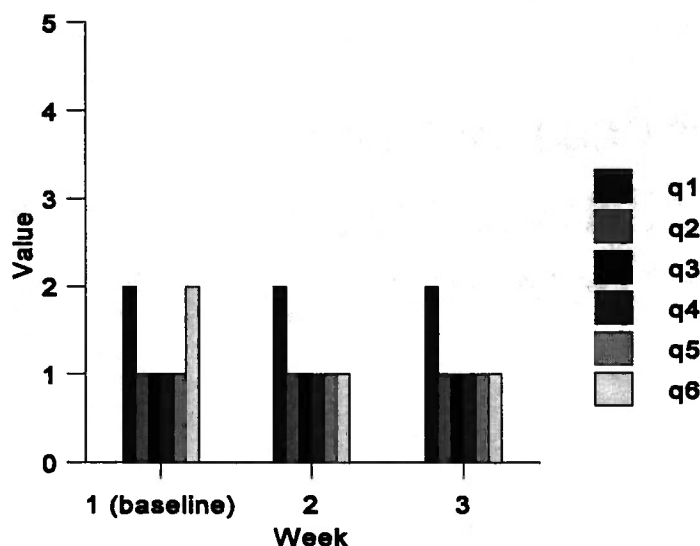


Figure 1.2. Case 1: Physical Aggression

Value: Has not been physically aggressive =1; Was physically aggressive once =2; Was physically aggressive twice =3; Was physically aggressive a few times =4; Was physically aggressive several times =5

Physical Aggression Questions: q1. My child has hit, pushed, bit, or physically harmed his/her siblings, cousins or peers; q2. Another adult has told me that my child is bad; q3. I received a letter or call from my child's school or caregiver reporting that he/she has harmed another student or school staff; q4. My child has tried to physically harm me; q5. My child has physically harmed me; q6. My child has physically harmed a stranger or an animal.

During week 3 Case 1 reported no occurrences of physical aggression to q2-q6, which is a drop by one occurrence to q6 when compared to baseline (Figure 1.2). There was no change reported to q1 after the intervention was introduced (Figure 1.2).

Data reported during weeks 2 and 3 support the hypothesis that physical aggression will decrease with the mother's decreased use of physical punishment.

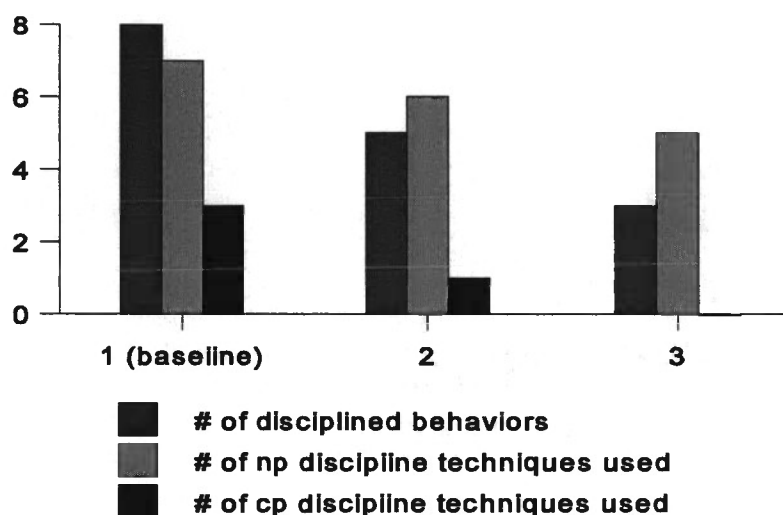


Figure 1.3. Case 1: Journal Results

At baseline Case 1 reported an average of .38 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and .88 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior. At week 2, after the introduction of the intervention, Case 1 reported .2 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and 1.2 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior. At week 3 Case 1 reported 0.0 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and 1.2 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior.

Case 1 reported on the corporal punishment beliefs questionnaire that she agrees with using corporal punishment to discipline children between the ages of 5-8 years old. Yet, she reported that she disagreed with the following statements, “it has been my experience that physical punishment eliminates problem behaviors in children”, “if you spare the rod you spoil the child”, and “physical punishments are more effective than nonphysical punishments when used to discipline children (Table 3.1 and 3.2). Case 1’s

beliefs about corporal punishment are reflected in her journal report. Before intervention, Case 1 reported using .88 nonphysical discipline techniques per disciplined behavior and only .38 corporal punishment techniques per disciplined behavior (Figure 1.3). By week 3, Case 1 reported not using any corporal punishment techniques per disciplined behavior (Figure 1.3). Her results correspond to her response on the beliefs questionnaire to the statement that, “the use of physical punishment to discipline children is the only way to get them to behave”, in which she reported that she disagreed with (Table 3.2). Case 4’s response to the statement, “I use time-out or similar forms of nonphysical punishments to discipline my child before I resort to physical punishments”, on the practices questionnaire, also correlates with her baseline journal results (Table 4; Figure 1.3).

The data reported by Case 1 supported the concept that mothers will report fewer perceived misbehaviors with their increased use of nonphysical discipline techniques. The data reported by Case 1 on her journal report does not support the hypothesis. Though week 1 shows that the mother’s use of corporal punishment and nonphysical discipline techniques was more effective in eliminating perceived misbehaviors, it cannot be assumed that the physical discipline techniques Case 1 reported using were “mild”. Case 1 had not been exposed to the intervention technique, knowledge of the APA suggested spanking technique, and therefore it cannot be assumed that Case 1 used a “mild” form of corporal punishment as part of her discipline techniques during week 1.

Case 2: Mother is 29 years old, married, has 2 children living in the home, has attained a college degree, is employed full-time, and reported a household income of \$70,000-more (Table 1). Focus child is male, 6 years old, and in the first grade (Table 2)

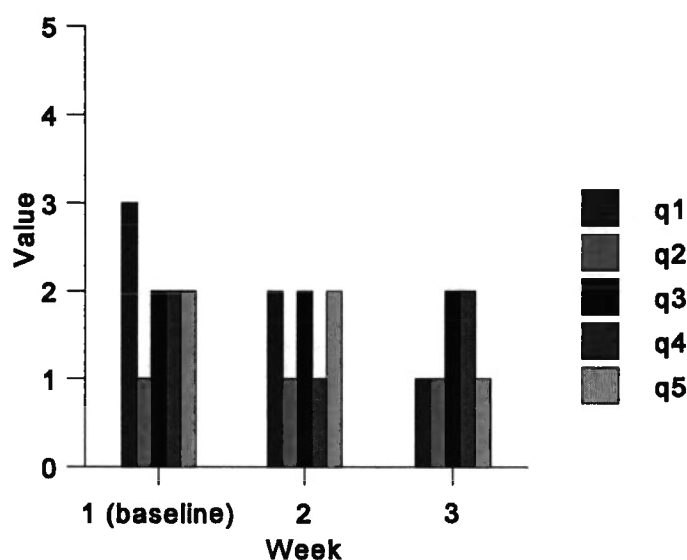


Figure 2.1. Case 2: Defiance of Authority

Value: Has not been disobedient =1; Was disobedient only once =2; Was disobedient twice =3; Was disobedient a few times =4; Was disobedient several times =5

Defiance of Authority Questions: q1. I told my child to stop doing something and he/she did not stop; q2. My child has answered “no” to my order or request; q3. My child has been report by a teacher or caregiver to be disobedient; q4. My child has repeated a behavior that I have previously punished him/her for; q5. My child has lied, been deceitful, or engaged in a behavior to avoid being detected for wrong-doing.

At week 3, Case 2 reported no change due to the intervention to q3. At week 2, Case 2 did report drops in occurrence to q1 and q4 by at least one occurrence when compared to baseline (Figure 2.1). At week 3, Case 2 reported no change in occurrence to q3 and no occurrence to all other questions, which is a drop in occurrence to q1, q3, and q4 by one or more occurrences when compared to baseline (Figure 2.1). The data reported by Case 3 shows that defiance of authority does drop with the decrease use of corporal punishment. This supports the hypothesis that mothers will report fewer instances of defiance with their increased use of nonphysical discipline techniques.

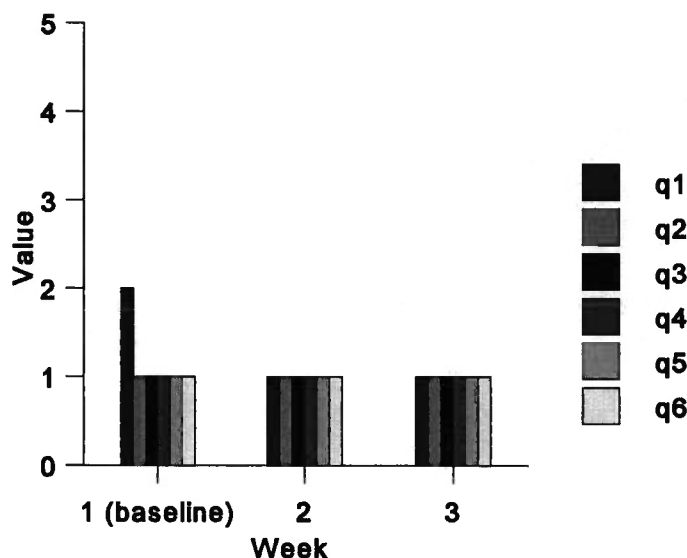


Figure 2.2. Case 2: Physical Aggression

Value: Has not been physically aggressive =1; Was physically aggressive once =2; Was physically aggressive twice =3; Was physically aggressive a few times =4; Was physically aggressive several times =5

Physical Aggression Questions: q1. My child has hit, pushed, bit, or physically harmed his/her siblings, cousins or peers; q2. Another adult has told me that my child is bad; q3. I received a letter or call from my child's school or caregiver reporting that he/she has harmed another student or school staff; q4. My child has tried to physically harm me; q5. My child has physically harmed me; q6. My child has physically harmed a stranger or an animal.

At week 2, after the introduction of the intervention, Case 2 reported no occurrence of physical aggression on all questions, which indicates a drop in occurrence by one to q1 when compared to baseline (Figure 2.2). During week 3, Case 2 again reported no occurrences of physical aggression (Figure 2.2). At baseline, Case 3 only reported a problem with her son's physical aggression toward his sibling and peers. Once the intervention was introduced, Case 3 did not report any physically aggressive activities taking place, showing that physical aggression decreased with the mothers' decrease in the use of corporal punishment.

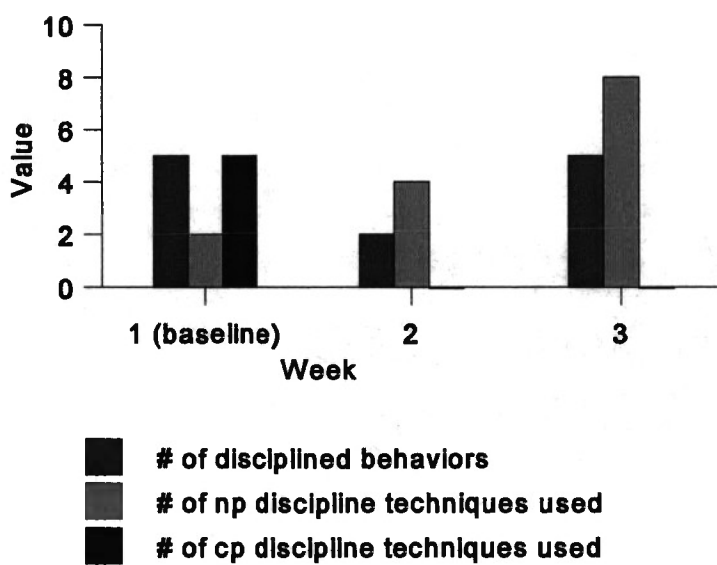


Figure 2.3. Case 2 Journal Results

At baseline, Case 2 reported an average of 1.0 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and .4 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior. At week 2, after the introduction of the intervention, Case 2 reported 0.0 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and 1.33 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior. At week 3, Case 2 reported 0.0 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and 1.33 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior.

Case 2 reported agreeing or strongly agreeing to the use of corporal punishment to discipline children between the ages of 5-8 years old, and that it has been her experience that corporal punishment eliminates problem behaviors in children (Table 3.1). Case 2 also reported that she strongly agreed with the statement that, “If you spare the rod you spoil the child” (Table 3.1). Though Case 2 reported strong beliefs in the use of corporal punishment, she did not agree with the statement that corporal punishment is more

effective than nonphysical punishments (Table 3.1). At baseline, Case 2 reported using corporal punishment for each disciplined behavior, but based on her report of discipline techniques used during weeks 2 and 3, she was able to refrain from using corporal punishment to effectively discipline her son (Figure 2.3). Responses on the beliefs questionnaire for Case 2 indicate that most of the time she tries to use nonphysical discipline techniques before resorting to the use of corporal punishment (Table 4). This is also reflected in the baseline data for Case 2, which shows that for at least one of the disciplined behaviors, she first attempted to use nonphysical punishment as a form of discipline, before she resorted to using corporal punishment (Figure 2.3).

The discipline techniques, reported by Case 2, shows that she did not use the APA recommended spanking technique during weeks 2 and 3 (Figure 2.3). This is unfortunate, based on the fact that Case 2 reported that most of the time she uses a belt, purse strap, switch, extension cord or similar objects to spank her son (Table 4). Had Case 2 utilized the recommended form of spanking, she could have personally evaluated the APA form of spanking for its effectiveness. Additionally, these methods pose a risk of child abuse.

One of the limitations of the study is that Case 2 spent more time at home with her son during week 3, due to a Thanksgiving break from school, which allowed her to observe and discipline more behaviors than she did at baseline. Averages of disciplined behaviors and discipline techniques show that Case 2 used less discipline techniques to alleviate perceived misbehaviors than she did at baseline. At baseline she averaged 1.4 techniques including the use of both nonphysical and physical discipline techniques. During week 3, Case 2 averaged 1.33 techniques and only used nonphysical discipline techniques. In this case, nonphysical discipline techniques alone, proved to be more

effective in eliminating problem behaviors.

Case 3: Mother is 26 years old, married, with 3 children living in the home. She has a high school education, is unemployed, and reported a household income of \$30,000-39,999 (Table 1). Focus child is a male, age 7, and in the second grade (Table 2).

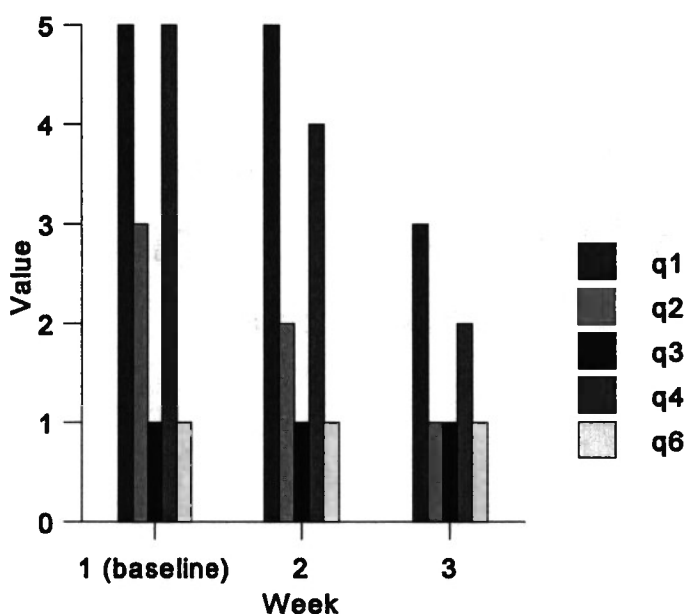


Figure 3.1. Case 3: Defiance of Authority

Value: Has not been disobedient =1; Was disobedient only once =2; Was disobedient twice =3; Was disobedient a few times =4; Was disobedient several times =5

Defiance of Authority Questions: q1. I told my child to stop doing something and he/she did not stop; q2. My child has answered “no” to my order or request; q3. My child has been report by a teacher or caregiver to be disobedient; q4. My child has repeated a behavior that I have previously punished him/her for; q5. My child has lied, been deceitful, or engaged in a behavior to avoid being detected for wrong-doing.

After the introduction of the intervention, Case 3 reported drops in defiance of authority to q1 and q4 by at least two occurrences when compared to baseline (Figure 3.1). At week three, Case 3 reported no occurrences to q2, q3, and q5, which is a drop by two occurrences to q2 when compared to baseline (Figure 3.1). Like Case 2, data for Case

3, supports the concept that a child's defiance of authority decreases with his mother's decreased use of corporal punishment.

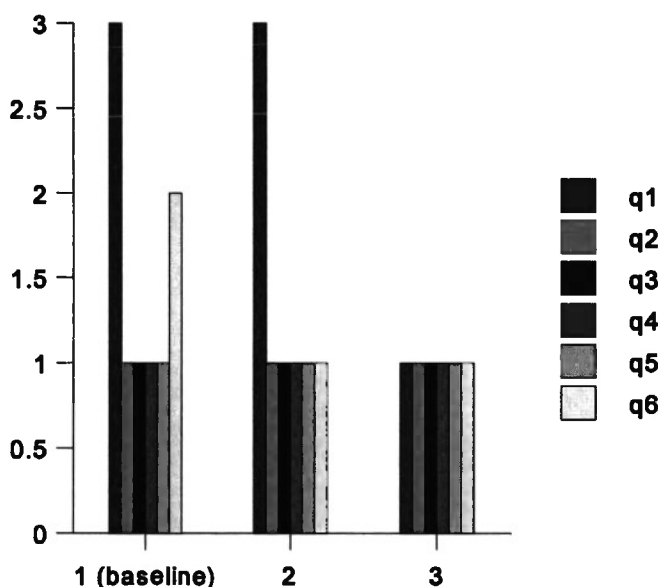


Figure 3.2. Case 3: Physical Aggression

Value: Has not been physically aggressive =1; Was physically aggressive once =2; Was physically aggressive twice =3; Was physically aggressive a few times =4; Was physically aggressive several times =5

Physical Aggression Questions: q1. My child has hit, pushed, bit, or physically harmed his/her siblings, cousins or peers; q2. Another adult has told me that my child is bad; q3. I received a letter or call from my child's school or caregiver reporting that he/she has harmed another student or school staff; q4. My child has tried to physically harm me; q5. My child has physically harmed me; q6. My child has physically harmed a stranger or an animal.

At week 3, Case 3 reported no occurrence to all questions on the physical aggression questionnaire, which is a drop by at least two occurrences to q1 and one occurrence to q6 when compared to baseline (Figure 3.2). Case 3 reported that in addition to the focus child, there are two other children living in her home. Case 3 often indicated on the journal sheet that she punished her son for hitting his siblings. This is apparent in her baseline and week 2 report of her son's physical aggression (Figure 3.2). Week 3 shows that Case 3's son's physical aggression toward his siblings and peers eventually decreased with the mother's consistent and increased use of nonphysical discipline

techniques. This supports the social learning theory that highlights modeling as a form of socialization.

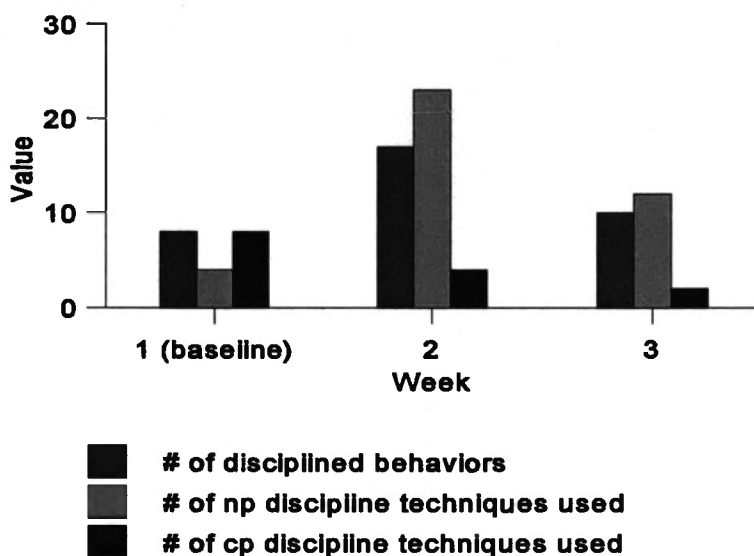


Figure 3.3. Case 3 Journal Results

At baseline Case 3 reported an average of .75 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and .38 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior. At week 2, after the introduction of the intervention, Case 3 reported .19 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and 1.38 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior. At week 3 Case 3 reported 0.2 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and 1.1 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior.

Even though Case 3 indicated on the corporal punishment practices questionnaire that most of the time she uses nonphysical punishments before corporal punishments, she responded to all of the questions on the corporal punishment beliefs questionnaire that pertained to the use of corporal punishment as an effective means of disciplining children,

with strongly agree (Table 4; Table 3.1; Table 3.2). The baseline data of Case 3 on the journal report indicates a higher use of corporal punishment per disciplined behavior when compared to her use of nonphysical discipline techniques per disciplined behavior (Figure 3.3). Figure 3.3 also shows that she was unable to eliminate her use of corporal punishment after the intervention was introduced. All of which support her strong belief in the use of corporal punishment. It is important to point out that Case 3 reported that she was not sure if corporal punishment is the only way to get children to behave, which is apparent in her increased implementation of nonphysical discipline techniques during weeks 2 and 3 (Figure 3.3).

The concept that mild spanking, coupled with nonphysical discipline techniques, is more effective in eliminating perceived misbehavior, is not supported by the journal report of Case 3. Case 3 reported using more discipline techniques during week 3 than she did at baseline, when she was using more corporal punishment techniques than nonphysical techniques (Figure 3.3). At baseline she averaged 1.13 discipline techniques per disciplined behavior and during week 3 her average was 1.3 discipline techniques per disciplined behavior. According to this data, it takes more nonphysical discipline techniques to eliminate problem behaviors than it does corporal punishment techniques.

As with Case 2, a limitation to the study is that Case 3 did not spend the same amount of time with her child during week 2 as she did during baseline because of Thanksgiving break. Therefore, it is not possible to assess if there was a decrease in perceived misbehaviors due to the mother's increased use of nonphysical discipline techniques.

Case 4: Mother is 23 years old, single, never married, has only 1 child living in the home, attended some college, is employed full-time, and reported a household income of \$20,000-29,999 (Table 1). Focus child is a male, age 6, and in kindergarten (Table 2).

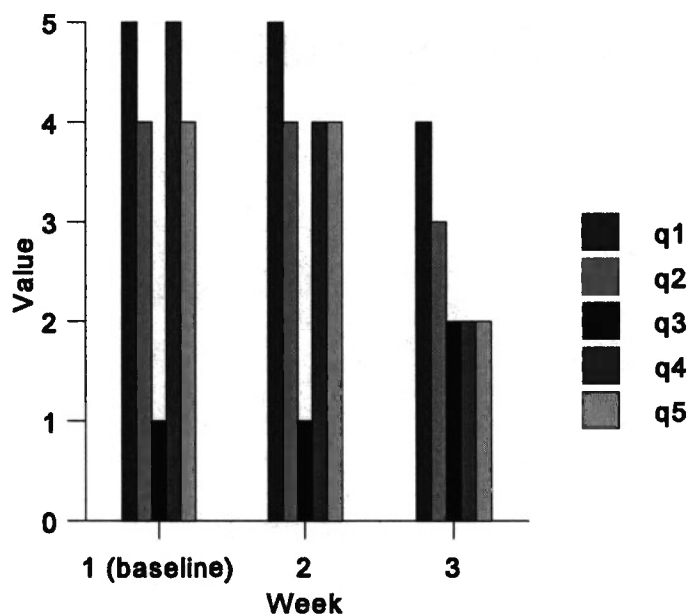


Figure 4.1. Case 4: Defiance of Authority

Value: Has not been disobedient =1; Was disobedient only once =2; Was disobedient twice =3; Was disobedient a few times =4; Was disobedient several times =5

Defiance of Authority Questions: q1. I told my child to stop doing something and he/she did not stop; q2. My child has answered “no” to my order or request; q3. My child has been report by a teacher or caregiver to be disobedient; q4. My child has repeated a behavior that I have previously punished him/her for; q5. My child has lied, been deceitful, or engaged in a behavior to avoid being detected for wrong-doing.

At week 2, after the intervention was introduced, the only change reported by Case 4, on the defiance of authority questionnaire was to q4, which dropped by one occurrence (Figure 4.1). At week 3, Case 4 reported a drop by two occurrences to q4 and q5 when compared to week 2, a drop by one occurrence to q1 and q2, and an increase by one occurrence to q3, which at baseline and week 2 had not occurred (Figure 4.1).

Though it was not until the second week after the intervention was introduced, Case 4 reported observing a decrease in defiance of authority on all questions on the defiance of authority questionnaire except for the q3, which pertained to the child being reported by a teacher or caregiver as being disobedient.

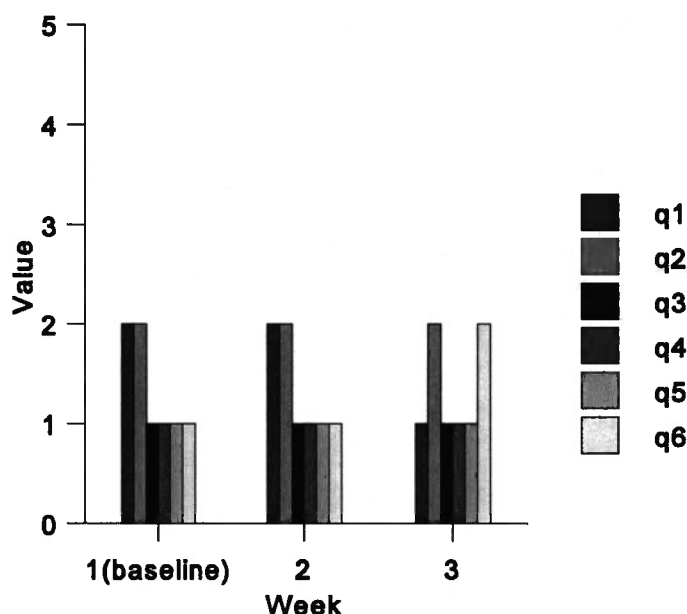


Figure 4.2. Case 4: Physical Aggression

Value: Has not been physically aggressive =1; Was physically aggressive once =2; Was physically aggressive twice =3; Was physically aggressive a few times =4; Was physically aggressive several times =5

Physical Aggression Questions: q1. My child has hit, pushed, bit, or physically harmed his/her siblings, cousins or peers; q2. Another adult has told me that my child is bad; q3. I received a letter or call from my child's school or caregiver reporting that he/she has harmed another student or school staff; q4. My child has tried to physically harm me; q5. My child has physically harmed me; q6. My child has physically harmed a stranger or an animal.

At week 2, after the intervention was introduced, Case 4 reported no change due to the intervention when compared to baseline (Figure 4.2). At week 3, Case 4 reported a decline by one occurrence to q1, no change to q2-q5 and an increase in occurrence by one to q6 (Figure 4.2).

The hypothesis that a child's physical aggression will decrease with the mother's increased use of nonphysical discipline techniques, is not supported by the data reported by Case 4 on the physical aggression questionnaire. Case 4, after intervention did not report a decrease in physical aggression. According to Case 4, her son continued to be reported by other adults as "bad" and even harmed a stranger during week 3.

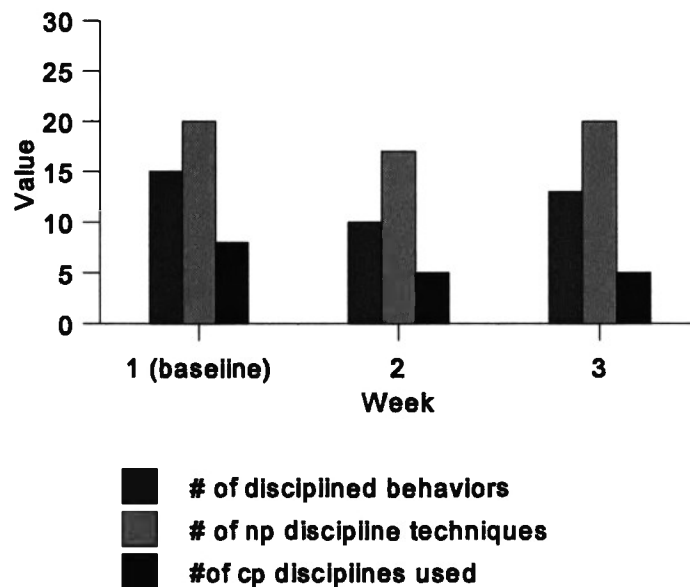


Figure 4.3. Case 4 Journal Results

At baseline, Case 4 reported an average of .6 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and 1.25 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior. At week 2, after the introduction of the intervention, Case 4 reported an average of .4 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and 1.7 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior. At week 3 Case 4 reported .23 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and 1.5 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior.

On the corporal punishment beliefs questionnaire, Case 4 responded to most of the questions that pertained to the use of corporal punishment to discipline children with strongly agree or agree (Table 3.1; Table 3.2). Yet, Case 4 responded to the statements, “The use of physical punishment to discipline children is the only way to get them to behave” and “Physical punishments are more effective than nonphysical punishments when used to discipline children”, with disagree. The responses by Case 3 to those questions indicate that although she believes in the use of corporal punishment, she also believes that there are other ways, besides corporal punishment, to effectively discipline children (Table 3.2). Journal results of Case 4 indicate, at baseline, that although she strongly believes in the use of corporal punishment, she does utilize nonphysical discipline techniques (Figure 4.3). Case 4 indicated that most of the time she utilized nonphysical punishments before using corporal punishments.

The journal results reported by Case 4 supports the concept that the use of mild spanking, in conjunction with nonphysical discipline techniques, as being more effective than primarily using physical punishments. During the baseline week, the Case 4 reported an average of 1.85 discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior, while during week 3, she reported using only 1.73 techniques, primarily using nonphysical techniques per disciplined behavior.

The amount of time Case 4 spent with her son remained consistent throughout the study but there was no decrease in the number of misbehaviors reported. Therefore, the hypothesis that the mothers would report a decrease in the number of perceived misbehaviors with their increased use of nonphysical discipline techniques, was not supported based on the data submitted by Case 4.

Case 5: Mother is 24 years old, she is not married but has a live-in partner, has 2 children living in the home, a high school education, is unemployed, and reported a household income of \$10,000-19,999 (Table 1). Focus child is a female, age 7, and is in the second grade (Table 2).

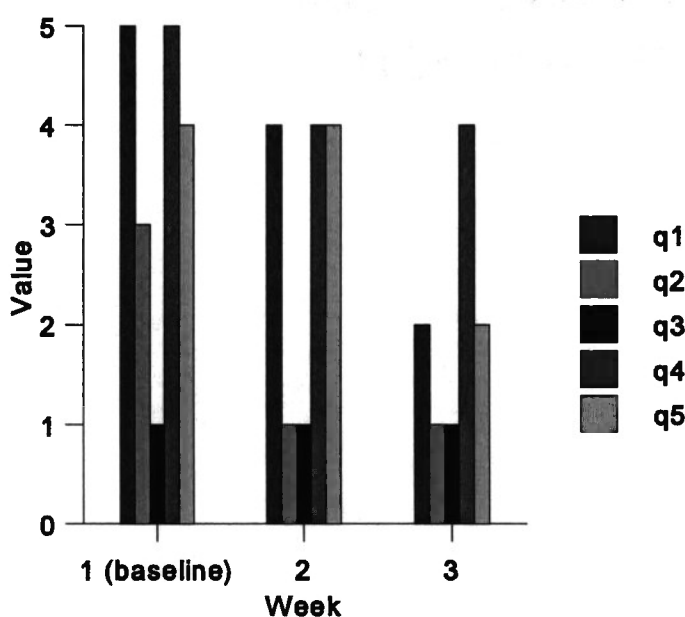


Figure 5.1. Case 5: Defiance of Authority

Value: Has not been disobedient =1; Was disobedient only once =2; Was disobedient twice =3; Was disobedient a few times =4; Was disobedient several times =5

Defiance of Authority Questions: q1. I told my child to stop doing something and he/she did not stop; q2. My child has answered “no” to my order or request; q3. My child has been reported by a teacher or caregiver to be disobedient; q4. My child has repeated a behavior that I have previously punished him/her for; q5. My child has lied, been deceitful, or engaged in a behavior to avoid being detected for wrong-doing.

At week 2, after the intervention was introduced, case 5 reported a decrease in occurrence of defiance by at least one to q1 and q4, and a decrease by two to q2 (Figure 5.1). At week 3, Case 5 reported a decrease by at least two occurrences to q1 and q5 when compared to baseline and no occurrence to q2 and q3 (Figure 5.1).

Despite the fact that Case 5 continued to report high numbers of occurrences of defiance on the defiance of authority questionnaire, the hypothesis, that defiance will decrease with the mothers increased use of nonphysical discipline techniques, was supported.

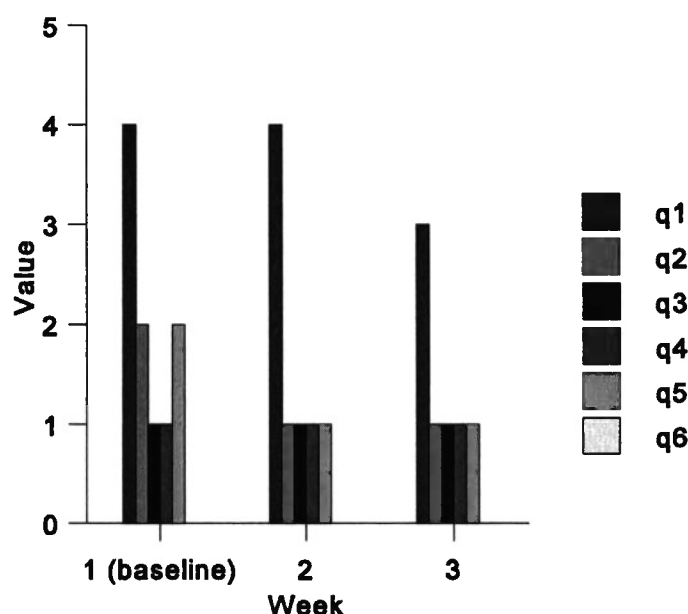


Figure 5.2. Case 5: Physical Aggression

Value: Has not been physically aggressive =1; Was physically aggressive once =2; Was physically aggressive twice =3; Was physically aggressive a few times =4; Was physically aggressive several times =5

Physical Aggression Questions: q1. My child has hit, pushed, bit, or physically harmed his/her siblings, cousins or peers; q2. Another adult has told me that my child is bad; q3. I received a letter or call from my child's school or caregiver reporting that he/she has harmed another student or school staff; q4. My child has tried to physically harm me; q5. My child has physically harmed me; q6. My child has physically harmed a stranger or an animal.

At week 2, after the introduction of the intervention, Case 5 reported a decline in physical aggression to q2 and q6, which is a decrease by one when compared to baseline (Figure 5.2). At week 3, Case 5 continued to report no change in occurrence of physical aggression to q1 and again no occurrence to q2-q6 (Figure 5.2).

The data reported during the two weeks prior to the introduction of the intervention, support the concept that physical aggression will decrease with the mother's increased use of nonphysical discipline techniques. Like the majority of the cases with other children living in the home besides the focus child, Case 5 continued to report occurrences of her daughter being physically aggressive toward siblings and peers (Figure 5.2).

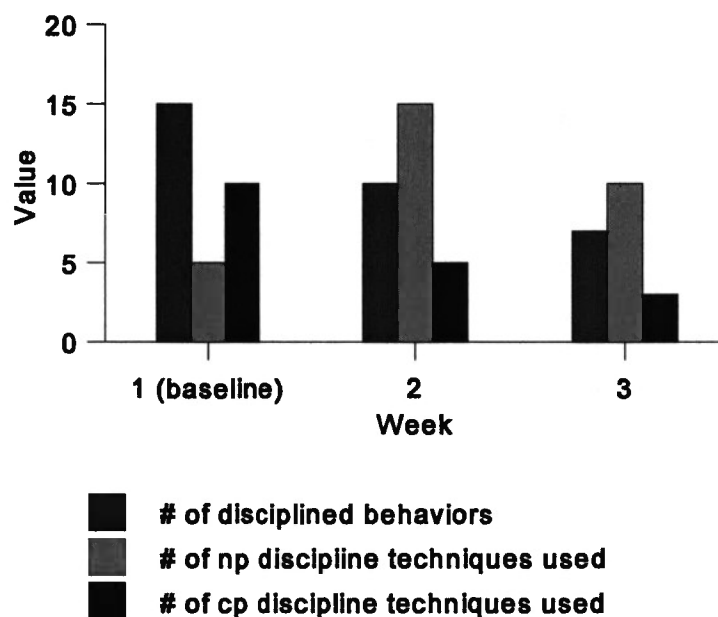


Figure 5.3. Case 5: Journal Results

At baseline, Case 5 reported an average of .73 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and .33 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior. At week 2, after the introduction of the intervention, Case 5 reported .45 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and 1.45 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior. At week 3, Case 5

reported .25 corporal punishment techniques used per disciplined behavior and 1.38 nonphysical discipline techniques used per disciplined behavior.

Case 5's responses of strongly agree or agree, to questions on the beliefs questionnaire regarding corporal punishment as an effective discipline technique, were reflected in her journal report, which showed a much higher use of corporal punishment per disciplined behavior when compared to the use of nonphysical discipline behaviors (Table 3.1; Table 3.2; Figure 5.3). At week 2, after the intervention was introduced, Case 5 reported incorporating the nonphysical discipline techniques into her discipline practices (Figure 5.3). Yet, Figure 5.3 shows that Case 5 continued to find corporal punishment necessary in disciplining her son. Case 5's report of her beliefs regarding corporal punishment, are reflected in her responses to the questions on the corporal punishment practices questionnaire (Table 4).

Journal results of Case 5 support the hypothesis, in that the mother reported a decrease in total problem behaviors after the intervention was introduced. However, the data, reported by the mother, does not support the concept that the combination of mild spanking and nonphysical discipline techniques is more effective than primarily using physical discipline techniques to eliminate perceived misbehavior. During baseline, the mother reported using 1.06 discipline techniques per problem behavior and 1.63 during week 3 after the intervention was introduced.

Responding to questions on the corporal punishment beliefs questionnaire, addressing differences between corporal punishment use by African Americans and Caucasians, the majority of the mothers reported similar beliefs (Table 3.1; Table 3.2). Case 1, 2, 3, and 4 stated that they were not sure if the use of corporal punishment is a

cultural phenomenon, while Case 5 disagreed with that statement (Table 3.1). Again, Case 1, 2, 3, and 4 responded the same way to the statement, "Caucasian children do not need to be physically punished because they are more well behaved than African American children" (Table 3.2). Case 5 stated that she disagreed with that statement. Case 2 and 3 stated that they were not sure if "African American parents use physical punishment to discipline their children more often than Caucasian parents" (Table 3.2). Both Case 1 and 5 stated that they agreed with the statement and Case 4 reported strongly agreeing to the statement.

The data collection and analysis provides useful didactic information regarding the use of corporal punishment by African American mothers of various ages, social, economic, and educational backgrounds and its effects on the behavior of African American children. The implications of the data collection and analysis are presented in chapter six.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

Conclusions

Children are imitators of behavior. They learn to interact with their siblings and peers through their interaction with their parents. This study has shown that children become less aggressive in their interaction with others upon their mothers utilizing less physically aggressive discipline techniques. Even mothers, who at the beginning of the study were not utilizing corporal punishment excessively, reported improvements in their child's behavior once they decreased or eliminated their use of corporal punishment. Not only is this due to the fact that the mothers modeled less aggressive behaviors themselves, but through their use of nonphysical discipline techniques, such as educating and contracting, they taught their children how they should behave and why. This was key in decreasing the reports of defiance. Based on the results of this limited study, it appears that once children better understand the natural consequences of their behavior and what behaviors are expected of them, they are less likely to repeat behaviors that they were previously punished for.

The population of mothers used in this study ranged from excessive use of corporal punishment to moderate levels and varied in demographic backgrounds, yet, each mother applied the mild form of spanking and nonphysical discipline techniques and saw improvements in their child's behavior. This suggests that every mother, regardless

of her current corporal punishment practices, can learn to employ mild forms of physical discipline and nonphysical discipline techniques in an effort to alleviate perceived misbehaviors, destroying the myth that one must “beat the badness” out of children. This study has shown that mild physical discipline techniques are effective in eliminating misbehavior.

While this study did not provide conclusive evidence that the combination of mild spanking and nonphysical discipline techniques is more effective in eliminating all misbehaviors, it does provide evidence that using slightly more than one nonphysical discipline technique per misbehavior, is just as effective in eliminating misbehaviors as using one physical discipline technique alone. In essence, a mother can effectively discipline her children using nonphysical discipline techniques but in order to do so, she must be committed to the possibility of having to employ more than one technique.

Implications for Social Work Practice

Social workers, responsible for constructing and conducting parenting classes for African American mothers who have abused or are at risk of abusing their children can now provide skeptical or unaware parents with evidence that mild spanking and nonphysical discipline techniques are effective in eliminating misbehaviors displayed by African American children. In order to prevent child abuse, it is important for social workers to teach parents the least physically harmful way to effectively discipline their children.

The results of this study are also valuable to social work practice in that it provides an alternative explanation for physical aggression and defiant behavior in

children. Many times, when children present with behavior problems, their parent's discipline practices are often not assessed. This study provides evidence that parenting practices can play a part in influencing aggressive and defiant behavior in children. It is important that social workers take parent's behaviors into account when assessing physically aggressive and defiant children, as well as educate parents regarding the use and benefits of incorporating nonphysical discipline techniques into their disciplinary practices.

As with other value laden issues, it is important that social workers put aside their own experiences with corporal punishment, be them positive or negative, in an effort to dedicate themselves to teaching parents to use the most effective non-abusive means of discipline. For many social workers, and for, African American social workers in particular, it is often difficult to question the continued use of various forms of corporal punishment because of their own experience of physical discipline by their own parents. This evaluation may evoke a sense of guilt in questioning one's parents or own current disciplinary practices. Yet, it is vital that social workers acknowledge their prejudice for or against certain discipline practices and the potentially deleterious effects it could have on their professional social work practice.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Flier



ARE YOU HAVING PROBLEMS DISCIPLINING YOUR CHILD?

IS YOUR CHILD BETWEEN 5-8 YEARS OLD?

***IS YOUR PRIMARY FORM OF DISCIPLINE PHYSICAL
PUNISHMENT?***

A Clark Atlanta University Master of Social Work graduate student is looking for African American mothers who are having trouble disciplining their 5-8 year olds to participate in a thesis research study. If you are interested in participating in this study and would like more information please contact:

Dominique at 404-221-4988

Appendix B. Informed Consent

Introduction

During the months of November and December, Dominique Harmon, a graduate student at Clark Atlanta University School of Social Work, will be conducting a research study regarding the use of corporal punishment by African American mothers.

The purpose of this study: The purpose of the study is to identify ways in which African American mothers can use corporal punishment and/or nonphysical discipline techniques to effectively eliminate continued misbehavior in African American children.

Research tests or procedures for this study: The mothers participating in the study will be required to keep a journal for 3 consecutive weeks noting their child's misbehaviors and the discipline techniques used to respond to those behaviors. The mothers will also be required to complete several short questionnaires. The questionnaires include a demographic questionnaire, a corporal punishment belief questionnaire, a corporal punishment practices questionnaire, a defiance of authority questionnaire and an aggression questionnaire. The defiance of authority and aggression questionnaire will be repeated at the end of each week. It is estimated that it will only take 2 minutes to complete each questionnaire. At the end of the first week, each mother will be provided with a list of nonphysical discipline techniques that she will be expected to use for the remainder of the study to discipline her child.

Each mother will be provided with instructions and a schedule highlighting when certain questionnaires and journals are due. The mothers will either be provided with addressed, stamped envelopes in order to mail these documents back to the researcher or the researcher will pick them up from a designated location.

Risks and discomforts to you if you take part in this study: Whether or not your child's behavior will become better or worse due to your participation in this study is unknown.

The benefits to you of taking part in this study: The benefit of taking part in this study is that upon its completion, you will know exactly what discipline techniques are most effective for disciplining your child.

What will happen to the information that is collected: The information collected during the course of the study will be included in a thesis research paper. All of the information collected during the course of this study will be held completely confidential. In reporting the results of the study, the researcher will assign each mother with an alias name in order to ensure that her identity remains confidential.

What to do if you decide you want to withdraw from the study? If you decide during the course of the study that you no longer want to participate you will need to contact the researcher as soon as possible to let her know.

How long will this study last and how many people will be enrolled? The study will last three weeks with each of the 5 participating mothers beginning on various dates throughout the months of November and December.

Further information regarding the study may be obtained from Dominique Harmon. Ms. Harmon can be contacted at 404-221-4988. If you agree voluntarily to participate in the proposed study, please sign below and return this form to Ms. Harmon. You will be sent a copy of this document.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C. Demographic Questionnaire

Parent

Sex: M F

Age: _____

Race: _____

Marital Status (circle one): Single Married Separated
Divorced Live-in Partner

Total number of children living in your home: _____

Number of your children living outside of your home: _____
(Examples: living with a relative or in foster care, etc.)

Educational Attainment (circle one):

Junior High High School Some College College Degree Graduate Degree

Employment Status (circle one):

Unemployed
Full-time

Part-time
Self-employed

Household Income (circle one):

\$0-9,999
\$10,000-19,999
\$20,000-29,999
\$30,000-39,999
\$40,000-49,999
\$50,000-59,999
\$60,000-69,999
\$70,000-or more

Focus Child

Sex: M F

Age: _____

Race: _____

Grade level: _____

Significant mental/medical conditions: _____
(Examples: mentally retarded, ADHD, physically handicap, fetal alcohol or drug exposed, etc.)

Appendix D. Corporal Punishment Beliefs Questionnaire

This questionnaire measures your belief in the use of physical punishment to discipline your child. This is not a test and therefore there are no right or wrong answers. Please place the number that corresponds to your answer in the space provided at the end of each question.

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Not sure

4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

1. It is okay to use physical punishment to discipline a child between the ages of 5-8 years. ____
2. It has been my experience that physical punishment eliminates problem behaviors in children. ____
3. The use of physical punishment to discipline children is a cultural phenomenon. ____
4. My parents used physical punishment to discipline me and that is why I turned out to be a respectable citizen. ____
5. If you spare the rod you spoil the child. ____
6. Caucasian children do not need to be physically punished because they are more well behaved then African American children. ____
7. The use of physical punishment to discipline children is the only way to get them to behave. ____
8. African American parents use physical punishment to discipline their children more often than Caucasian parents. ____
9. Physical punishments are more effective than nonphysical punishments when used to discipline children. ____
10. Parents who do not use physical punishments to discipline their children will suffer later when their children become out of control. ____

Appendix E. Corporal Punishment Practices Questionnaire

This questionnaire measures the type or forms of physical punishment you use to discipline your child. This is not a test and therefore there are no right or wrong answers. Please place the number that matches your answer in the space provided at the end of each question.

1 = Never

2 = Very rarely

3 = Sometimes

4 = Most of the time

5 = Always

1. I spank my child with a belt, purse strap, switch, extension cord or similar objects.

2. I spank my child at least 5 times per week. _____
3. My child has visual marks on his or her body immediately after I physically punish him or her. _____
4. I use time-out or similar forms of nonphysical punishments to discipline my child before I resort to physical punishments. _____
5. As a form of punishment I shake, slap, punch, kick, or throw objects at my child.
_____.

Appendix F. Focus Child's Defiance of Authority Questionnaire

This questionnaire measures your child's disobedience. This is not a test and therefore there are no right or wrong answers. Please place the number that matches to your answer in the space provided at the end of each question.

1 = Has not been disobedient

2 = Was disobedient only once

3 = Was disobedient twice

4 = Was disobedient a few times

5 = Was disobedient several times

During this week:

1. I told my child to stop doing something and he or she did not stop. ____
2. My child has answered "no" to my order or request. ____
3. My child has been reported by a teacher or caregiver to be disobedient. ____
4. My child has repeated a behavior that I have previously punished him or her for.

5. My child has lied, been deceitful, or engaged in a behavior to avoid being detected for wrong-doing. ____

Appendix G. Focus Child's Physical Aggression Questionnaire

This questionnaire measures the level of physical aggression your child has displayed during this week towards others. (Examples of physical aggression include hitting, pushing, biting, slapping, throwing objects, etc.) This is not a test and therefore there are no right or wrong answers. Please place the number that matches your answer in the space provided at the end of each question.

1 = Has not been physically aggressive

2 = Was physically aggressive once

3 = Was physically aggressive twice

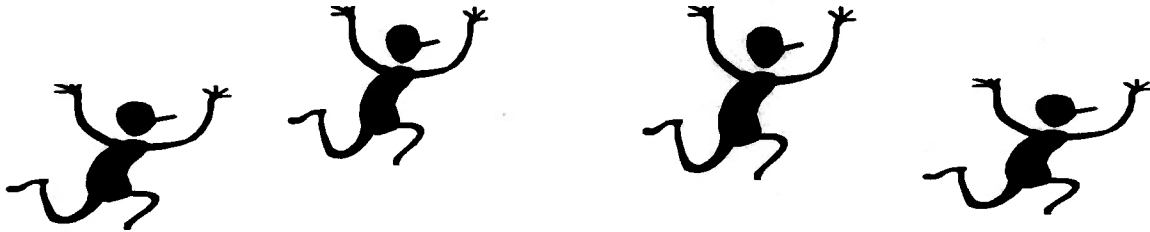
4 = Was physically aggressive a few times

5 = Was physically aggressive several times

During this week:

1. My child has hit, pushed, bit, or physically harmed his or her siblings, cousins or peers. ____
2. Another adult has told me that my child is bad. ____
3. I received a letter or call from my child's school or caregiver reporting that he or she has harmed another student or school staff. ____
4. My child has tried to physically harm me. ____
5. My child has physically harmed me. ____
Please describe your injury. _____
6. My child has physically harmed a stranger or an animal. ____

Appendix H. Nonphysical Discipline Techniques



Nonphysical Discipline Techniques

Educate

Explain to your child the possible natural consequences of his/her behavior. Make sure your child knows the rules and what type of behavior is expected of him/her.

Allow safe, natural consequences to occur

Allow the **safe**, natural consequences of your child's behavior to occur and then explain to him/her why that consequence took place.

Examples of ways to apply this technique include:

- ▶ if your child refuses to eat his/her breakfast don't force him/her to do so. But later, once he/she has gotten hungry, explain to him/her why he/she is hungry and that if he/she eats breakfast tomorrow he/she will not be hungry the during the day.
- ▶ if your child refuses to go to bed, let him/her stay up, then the next morning when he/she is tired, explain to him why he/she is tired and what can be done tonight to prevent him/her from being tired tomorrow.

****Do not allow your child to be hurt (e.g., burned, cut, etc.)***

Make a contract to change behavior

If your child has an annoying habit, you can make a contract to eliminate it. To do this:

- Agree on what behavior is expected.
- Discuss and choose appropriate rewards for the expected behavior and consequences for misbehavior.
- Record successful behavior – with a chart of checkmarks, stickers, smiley faces, etc.

Appendix H. Nonphysical Discipline Techniques - Continued

Repayment

If your child damages or destroys property, have him/her repair the damage or pay for it with his/her own money. The child should also apologize to the property owner.

Scolding

A sharp "No!" or "Stop it!" can be effective in stopping "bad" behavior. If you decide to scold your child, be sure to say only what is necessary to stop the misbehavior. Once you have gotten your child's attention, take the opportunity to remind him/her what type of behavior is expected of him/her and what the consequences will be if he/she continues to misbehave.

Removing Privileges

Forbid your child from doing an activity that he/she enjoys. Be sure that your child understands why his/her privileges have been taken away.

Isolation/Time-out

Once you have explained to your child what he/she has done wrong, take or tell him/her to go to a quiet, safe place, away from people and toys, so that he or she can calm down and think about what he/she has done. Time-out for children between 5-8 years-old, should not last longer than 10 minutes.

Physical Punishment

If none of the above nonphysical forms of discipline prove to be effective, as a last resort, utilize one of your previously practiced form of physical punishments that **does not** include the use of an object (e.g., don't use a belt, extension cord, purse strap, switch, etc.). An example of a possible form of physical discipline includes using one or two flat-handed swats on your child's hand, arm or rear end.

If you have any questions as to how to apply any of the above techniques, please feel free to contact me. Good Luck!!

**Dominique
404-221-4988**

[illegible]

For researchers use only.

Total # of Disciplined Behaviors:

Total # of instances for which CP was used:

List of effective alternative discipline techniques

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